

Hero of the Faith: The Virgin Mary, Mother of God

Opening Prayer: *A Collect for The Visitation*

Almighty God, by whose grace Elizabeth rejoiced with the blessed Virgin Mary and greeted her as the mother of the Lord: Look with favor on your lowly servants, that, with Mary, we may magnify your holy Name and rejoice to acclaim her Son as our Savior; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Observe:

“Mary, did you know?”

What exactly *did* Mary find out from the angel about her future son? (And what was left undisclosed?) **Circle** all the information the angel told her about Jesus. What else did Mary know? In Mary’s song of praise v.46-56, **underline** all the actions of God- what God *does* for her and for his people.

Luke 1:26–56

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” 29 But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” 34 Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” 35 The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36 And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.” 38 Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

39 In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, 40 where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit 42 and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. 43 And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? 44 For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

46 And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

48 for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

50 His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

51 He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;
53 he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
54 He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”
56 And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

Interpret:

- 1) Based on what we circled and underlined, if you were Mary, and didn't know the ending of the story yet, what might you be imagining for your son's future? (What would the David's throne and kingdom mean to you?)
- 2) Keeping in mind the angel's promise that her son will be king, how does that connect with any of the themes in Mary's song of praise?
- 3) Mary prophesies the coming of the Kingdom of God. How does her son's coming kingdom look different from the kingdoms of this world?
- 4) What makes Mary a hero? What stands out to you about what she says to the angel? How would this call be a risk to her?

Apply:

- 1) Mary asked questions of God when she didn't understand (v. 34) but she also accepted and submitted to her calling (v. 38). Elizabeth says that Mary is blessed, *because* she believed the word of the Lord. Mary questions God, like Abraham, but is said to have great faith. The questions help her converse with God and understand her calling, and she is able to accept it. Most days we do not know exactly what God is asking of us, and most of Mary's days up to this point were probably like that. But when God comes to her, her heart is open to his call and open to believe the impossible. None of us will receive Mary's call, but all of us can engage with God, believe his word, and offer ourselves to his service.
*If you could ask God one question about your life what would it be?
*What area of your life can you offer to God and say, "Here I am, the Servant of the Lord"?

Closing Prayer:

Close by praying the Magnificat (v. 46–57), reading it aloud together in unison.